

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday-Inn Lansing West
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
August 8, 2007

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:38 p.m. on Wednesday, August 8, 2007, in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice-Chair
John Bernard

Members Absent:

Jason Dinsmore
Larry Harrington
Sheriff Scott Strait
Peter Wycoff

Department of Natural Resources (Department) Staff Present:

James Radabaugh, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve DeBrabander, FMFM, Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing
Joe Taylor, FMFM, Lansing
Lt. Creig Grey, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing
Lt. Dan Hopkins, LED, Roscommon
Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation Division, Mears

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Chairman Ranney welcomed everyone. The Board, Department staff, and the audience introduced themselves.

MINUTES

Minutes of the May 9, 2007, ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting. No action taken due to lack of a quorum.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Paul Mulder, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive stated he and other members of his organization have attended many ORV Trails Advisory Board Meetings and said it seems the same topics are discussed over and over again with no resolution. He handed out ten questions to the board.

OLD BUSINESS

Trail Expansion Update – **Chairman Ranney** introduced Mr. R.J. Witte. **Mr. Witte** made a power point presentation illustrating ideas for potential ORV trail and route expansion. The preliminary expansion plan includes approximately 1,300 miles, most of which is located on state and national forest land. Ideas for expansion were brought forward by ORV clubs, local government, and private citizens. This effort was coordinated through the Michigan Motorized Recreation Coalition (MMRC).

The MMRC will meet in September to prioritize areas for expansion. **Chairman Ranney** thanked Mr. Witte.

Trail Proposal Process – **Steve Kubisiak** made a power point presentation that summarized the trail proposal process and the evaluation criteria that will be used by the Department to evaluate new trail proposals. The Department will evaluate proposals within the context of its statutory obligations, balanced against multiple management goals.

Long Range Financial Plan Workgroup Update – **Chairman Ranney** reported members of the Long Range Financial Plan Workgroup have been identified. They are: Dick Ranney and Glenn Moll, representing the ORV Board, Lewis Shuler, representing motorcycle groups, Sue Thrushman, representing ATV groups, Paul Hittie, representing truck groups, and Kelly Johnston, representing Michigan Motorcycle Dealers. Members from the Department are: Steve Kubisiak, Steve DeBrabander, Jim Radabaugh, Joe Tayler, Creig Grey, and Jim Wood.

The first meeting is tentatively scheduled to occur after the beginning of the next fiscal year in October. A second meeting is tentatively scheduled on November 7 to coincide with the next ORV Board meeting. It is anticipated the workgroup will accomplish their task in four work sessions in a combination of face-to-face meetings and conference calls.

Mr. Ranney and Mr. Moll will serve on a finance subcommittee for the ORV Board and represent the ORV Board on the Long Range ORV Finance Workgroup. They will report workgroup findings and recommendations back to the full Board.

The charge of the Long Range Financial Plan Workgroup is to develop a financial plan for the long-term management and operation of the ORV Program.

Safety Education Workgroup Update – **Lt. Grey** reported the workgroup met in July and finalized the curriculum, and discussed strategies on how to roll it out to the instructors. The plan is to develop regional lead instructors that will train instructors throughout the state.

NEW BUSINESS

ORV Fund Revenue Report – **Joe Taylor** distributed a handout that was presented to the finance subcommittee of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) earlier this year. He reviewed fund authority, distribution formula, fund balance, and revenue and expenditure projections. He said revenues are relatively stable with slight increases over the past few years. The fund is projected to have a positive balance through 2008 with a \$400,000 deficit projected in 2009, and \$2.0 million dollar deficit projected in 2010.

Proposed 2008 Trail Maintenance Reimbursement Rate – **Jim Radabaugh** reported staff recommended, and Chief Boyd approved, an increase to the trail maintenance reimbursement rates to take effect in 2008. Rates were last adjusted in 2002. The rate increase is based on the consumer's price index. It represents approximately a 12% increase over the 2002 rate and will amount to an increase of approximately \$38,000 to the annual trail maintenance budget based on current system mileage. The 2008 rates are: Trail \$61/mile, Route \$46/mile, and single track trail grading \$109/mile. Staff will adjust 2008 grant requests to reflect the increase.

The Long Range Financial Plan Workgroup will review trail maintenance reimbursement rates as part of their charge in consideration for potential future adjustments that may occur after the 2008 season, based on program revenue and sustainability.

STAFF REPORTS

USDA Forest Service – Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest reported the M-33 route is complete and they have received many compliments. The Alcona County connector is under environmental review and expected to go out for public comment next year. The Huron Shores Ranger Station is currently taking public comment on the proposed decision on the M65 bridge snowmobile trail designation project. The Hiawatha National Forest expects to have a final decision on the proposed motorcycle trail in November. Motor Vehicle Use Maps have been published for the Ottawa National Forest; Hiawatha National Forest is expected to be complete this fall; Huron in the spring of 2008, and Manistee spring of 2009.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – Steve Kubisiak reported the Department received 24 ORV trail improvement grant applications, requesting approximately \$2.5 million dollars. Grants Management is currently conducting administrative completeness reviews. Forest, Mineral and Fire Management will complete field reviews and compile funding recommendations. Grant recommendations will be provided to the Board as information in November.

Silver Lake State Park – Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation Division reported park attendance was down approximately 7%, and ORV license sales at the park down 5%. Accident rates are close to last year with one fatality reported. The drain field project will be complete next week.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Ernie Brooks expressed concerns with poor trail conditions at Mio, Atlanta, and Ambrose Lake trail systems. He believes Michigan's entire ORV trail system is in poor shape. He said he was told by several club members that maintain the Atlanta trail system they have not been paid since 2005. He expressed concern with vault toilets at the Meadows National Forest Campground, and expressed opposition to the camping fee increase at state forest ORV campgrounds.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Next Meeting:

November 7, 2007 Lansing Holiday Inn-West

Public Present

Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club (CCC)

Ernie Brooks

Bob Devoes, Great Lakes 4Wheel Drive

Assoc. (GLFWDA)

R.J. Witte, CCC

Bill Gilbert, MI ATV Safety Association

David Thomas, ATV Off Road Club

Trish Moorton, ATV Off Road Club

Corey Sanders, ATV Off Road Club

Sue Thrushman, ATV Off Road Club

Ronald Price, Cadillac Jeeps Off Road Club

Paul Mulder, GLFWDA

Melanie Rice, GLFWDA

Marc D. Smith, ASI

Cameron Habermehl, Alpena County

Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree USA

Lyn Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree USA

Pat Brower, GLFWDA